

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Cancelled)

Claim 2 (Currently amended): The skeleton member structure according to claim 43, wherein the granular materials are filled directly into the space defined by the skeleton member and the surrounding panel or into a filling member which is fitted into the skeleton member.

Claim 3 (Currently amended): ~~The skeleton member structure according to claim 1,~~ A skeleton member structure comprising:

a skeleton member; and

granular materials having hollow portions or being porous,

wherein at least one of a space inside the skeleton member and a space defined between the skeleton member and a surrounding panel member is filled with the granular materials, and

wherein the skeleton member includes a plurality of frames, side sills, cross members, pillars, beams and rails, all being for use on an automobile.

Claim 4 (Currently amended): ~~The skeleton member structure according to claim 1,~~ A skeleton member structure comprising:
a skeleton member; and
granular materials having hollow portions or being porous,
wherein at least one of a space inside the skeleton member and a space defined between the skeleton member and a surrounding panel member is filled with the granular materials, and

wherein the granular materials are first granular materials and further comprising second granular materials, adjacent ones of the second granular materials being bonded to one another by the first granular materials having hollow portions.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The skeleton member structure according to claim 4, wherein the first granular materials are made of a resin material.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): The skeleton member structure according to claim 4, wherein the second granular materials are solid.

Claim 7 (Previously presented): The skeleton member structure according to claim 4, wherein the second granular materials comprise hollow or porous granular materials.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): A method for forming a solidified granular material that is filled in at least one of a skeleton member and in a space defined by

the skeleton member and a surrounding panel member, the method comprising the steps of:

mixing first granular materials that are hollow and made of a resin, with second granular materials; and

bonding adjacent ones of the second granular materials to one another via the first granular materials by melting surfaces of the first granular materials.

Claim 9 (Currently amended): The skeleton member structure according to claim 43, wherein both the space inside the skeleton member and the space defined between the skeleton member and the surrounding panel member are filled with the granular materials.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The skeleton member structure according to claim 9, wherein the granular materials are filled directly into the space surrounded by the skeleton member or into a filling member which is fitted into the skeleton member.

Claim 11 (Cancelled)

Claim 12 (Previously presented): A skeleton member structure according to claim 9, wherein the granular materials are first granular materials and further comprising second granular materials, adjacent ones of the second granular materials being bonded to one another by the first granular materials having hollow portions.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): A skeleton member structure according to claim 12, wherein the first granular materials are made of a resin material.

Claim 14 (Previously presented): A skeleton member structure according to claim 12, wherein the second granular materials are solid.

Claim 15 (Currently amended): A ~~skeleton~~skeleton member structure according to claim 12, wherein the second granular materials comprise hollow or porous granular materials.